

# FLEET FOCUS

## Carter relieves Nault as Salvor commanding officer

**Lt. j.g. Paul Shoning**  
*USS Salvor (ARS 52)*

Overshadowed by the unprecedented attack on America earlier in the week, Sept. 12 began a new chapter in the life of the USS Salvor (ARS 52). In waters south of Oahu, the crew of the USS Salvor assembled to witness the transfer of total responsibility, authority and accountability from Cmdr. William J. Nault to Lt. Cmdr. John A. Carter.

An event usually marked by ceremonial bands and color guards, Salvor's change of command took place to the sound of the wind and waves under the shadow of armed machine gunners keeping watch. In his brief remarks, Cmdr. Nault thanked the crew for their sustained effort and dedication to excellence. Noting that the life of a warship sees many commanding officers, Nault implored the crew to remain focused on the mission at hand.

Nault assumed command of USS Salvor (ARS 52) on Jan. 14, 2000. During his tour on Salvor, the ship conducted numerous towing operations from Pearl Harbor to San Francisco and Bremerton, Wash.

These included four independent transits to and from the West Coast from Pearl Harbor as well as three transits with tows through the challenging Rich Passage in Bremerton, totaling over 8,000 nautical miles of incident-free towing.

In addition to participating in Exercise Kernel Blitz in both 2000 and 2001, Salvor was tasked with the short notice search and rescue (SAR) mission after the sinking of the Ehime Maru in February 2001. Almost immediately after the change of command, Nault assumed duties as the operations officer for Navy Region Hawaii.

With the words "I relieve you, sir," Lt. Cmdr. Carter became the first nuclear surface warfare officer to command one of the

Navy's four rescue and salvage vessels.

Following his tour as detailer for nuclear surface warfare officers, he spent several months learning the unique challenges faced in each of Salvor's four mission areas: salvage of stranded vessels, rescue and assistance, recovery of submerged objects and manned diving operations. On Sept. 12, with the roll of the sea, Carter began his own chapter as USS Salvor's eighth commanding officer.

## Lincoln Battle Group commander visits Hopper, talks force protection

**Lt. j.g. Charla Schreiber**  
*USS Hopper (DDG 70)*

"The Navy exists to win the next war at sea," stated Rear Adm. John M. Kelly during his visit to the USS Hopper (DDG 70) on Sept. 5. A moment later he explained that he begins every speech with that line.

As the crew listened to the man who commands the Abraham Lincoln Battle Group and Cruiser Destroyer Group 3, under whom Destroyer Squadron 31 was recently placed, some wondered why an admiral would choose to reiterate something that seems pretty obvious.

Though every member of the world's strongest navy knows that our duty is to win the war at sea, there are many measures that must be taken to ensure we are ready for it. And in the case of our personnel, it is not just a matter of meeting certain provisions, but of transcending to a primed mindset.

Speaking to Hopper a week before the catastrophic events of

Sept. 11, Rear Adm. Kelly's message was prophetically one of warning. "It's not a matter of if, but when," he said, describing the possibility of terrorism in the seemingly stable world. To meet the rise of these events, he encouraged Sailors to realize their role to our country. The drive to understand, to maintain, to fix and to employ the most advanced ships and weapons must become our focus. We must live force protection and be ready for combat. And now, more than ever, this stands true.

Rear Adm. Kelly's philosophy injected a sharp impression to our crew to be even better Sailors, to stand a little taller and to carry the weight that has been entrusted to us as America's first defense. It is doubtful that he realized what would transpire less than a week after his address to the Hopper, but we are assured that he is an insightful and decisive leader with whom we will be proud to serve.



FC3 Tyler Whitt photo

Rear Adm. John Kelly talks with Sailors during a visit to USS Hopper (DDG 70) Sept. 5.